

the largest to date: the House vote was 390–33 and the Senate vote was 98–0. President Bush signed the measure into law on July 27, 2006.

2. How did Section 5 work to prevent discrimination in 2012?

In South Carolina (Voter ID): The federal court approved the state's voter ID law in future elections only after DOJ's use of Section 5 ensured that the final law would not discriminate against African-American voters.

In Texas (Redistricting): The federal district court denied preclearance to Texas' redistricting plans for Congress, state Senate, and state House, and affirmatively found that the plans for Congress and state Senate were adopted with a racially discriminatory purpose.

In Florida (Early Voting): The federal court denied approval of a reduction in early voting until state agreed to implement plan that would not make it more difficult for minorities to vote.

3. How will Congress respond to the Supreme Court decision?

Congress will work in a measured bipartisan manner to conduct hearings and to deliberate in order to determine the appropriate legislative response to the Court's decision and to ensure that the voting rights of Americans are not violated.

At a threshold level, Congress must hold oversight hearings to determine the current scope of voting discrimination across the country. This bipartisan process would review not only voting discrimination in past covered jurisdictions, but voting discrimination in all other states. This oversight process will necessarily involve the Department of Justice and all parts of the civil rights advocacy community.

We must be careful to maintain a deliberative and bipartisan oversight process. While the process may not yield immediate results, we must be careful ensure that it yields comprehensive a result that will survive legal scrutiny.

Until a new coverage formula is in place, the Section 5 "preclearance" remedy is inactive, as there are no covered jurisdictions. That will require each of us to maintain vigilance with respect to discrimination, particularly in formerly covered jurisdictions, as Section 5 protections will probably sent during the 2014 election cycle.

1. Supreme Court found the current Section 5 Coverage formula Unconstitutional:

The Court ruled that Section 5 cannot be enforced unless Congress crafts a new formula for determining which states and localities are covered by the "preclearance" mechanism. By a 5–4 vote, the Court found that Congress in the 2006 reauthorization relied on 40-year-old data that does not reflect racial

progress and changes in U.S. society. The Court found that Congress must "identify those jurisdictions to be singled out on a basis that makes sense in light of current conditions." The Court recognized that "voting discrimination still exists" and remains a problem that Congress is constitutionally entitled to address through legislation.

The court did not strike down the "preclearance" approval requirement of the law that has been used, mainly in the South, to open up polling places to minority voters in the nearly half century since it was first enacted in 1965. However, the Court noted that Congress must update the formula for determining which parts of the country must seek Washington's approval, in advance, for election changes.

2. What did Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act require?

Required that all or part of 16 states with a history of discrimination in voting submit requests to change election-related procedures for federal approval before they can be implemented.

Requests could be submitted to U.S. Attorney General or to the U.S. District Court for DC.

Freezes voting changes before implemented to stop voting discrimination before it begins.

Section 5 reauthorized by Congress in 1970, 1975, 1982, and 2006.

Requires covered jurisdictions to show that a voting change is not discriminatory.

Covers more jurisdictions than the South/Geographic Coverage of Section 5.

Entire State: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia.

Jurisdictions within a State: California, Florida, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, South Dakota.

IN HONOR OF BRENDA BATTAT
FOR HER SERVICE TO THE
HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICA

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 27, 2013

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today to recognize the accomplishments of my constituent, Brenda Battat, and her 24 years of dedicated service to the Hearing Loss Association of America, HLAA. Through her tenure at HLAA, which she has served as Executive Director since 2008, Ms. Battat was instrumental in making HLAA the

nation's leading consumer organization for people with hearing loss. Among her many accomplishments, Ms. Battat made significant contributions to raising public awareness on hearing loss and advocating for greater accessibility in public and private venues.

At the HLAA, Ms. Battat worked to ensure that Americans with hearing loss have more and better health care and technology options. She led advocacy efforts to increase consumer choice in the hearing loss marketplace. She assisted people with hearing loss in obtaining more options for communication and entertainment, such as hearing aid-compatible telephones and increased captioning of internet and mobile television programming. By fighting to make hearing aids and hearing technology more affordable and promoting the use of hearing assistive technology with consumer train-the-trainer programs, Ms. Battat has achieved easier and more effective communication for the hard of hearing. Ms. Battat's promotion of hearing assistive technology has removed barriers for those with hearing loss to participate fully in both private and community life.

Ms. Battat, who herself has a profound hearing loss and uses a cochlear implant and hearing aid, has served on many state and national advisory boards, including the National Institute on Deafness & Other Communication Disorders Advisory Council, the National Association of Hearing and Speech Action, the National Center for Deaf Health Research External Committee, the Maryland Telecommunications Relay Advisory Committee, the Federal Communications Commission's Hearing Aid Compatibility Negotiated Rulemaking Committee, and Consumer/Disability Telecommunications Advisory Committee. In short, her efforts have benefitted countless people.

Ms. Battat's outstanding work has earned her well-deserved national recognition. She received the Sheldon Williams Itzkoff Leadership Award in 2010, the Robert H. Weitbrecht Telecommunications Access Award in 2007, the Oticon Focus on People Advocacy Award in 2005, and the Self Help for Hard of Hearing People National Access Award in 2002. Under her leadership, the HLAA maintained financial stability and earned the GuideStar Exchange Seal for transparency.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to represent Brenda Battat in the U.S. House of Representatives and to thank her for her outstanding accomplishments on behalf of those with hearing loss. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ms. Battat on her contributions and in wishing her an enjoyable and fulfilling retirement.